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Mississippi's Merritts leave mark on Europe

By Mike Creswell
SBC Foreign Mission Board

WIESBADEN, Germany — Draw a map of Baptist work in Europe and somewhere you'll have to put the names of Mississippians John and Elizabeth Merritt.

For more than 30 years these two Southern Baptist foreign missionaries have helped start and lead English language Baptist churches in Europe. As they retire and head home to their native Mississippi this fall, they leave a solid record — and a bit of their hearts — behind.

Since 1972 Merritt has served as general secretary of the European Baptist Convention (EBC), a fellowship of 66 English-speaking congregations across Europe. These nearly two and a half decades have included Cold War years in which most English-language churches were composed of American military personnel put in Europe to fend off an attack which never came.

The fall of communism in 1989 meant many of those soldiers and their families went back to the United States — and more than a dozen EBC churches closed for lack of members.

The EBC switched its emphasis to reaching international citizens for whom English is an

important language. Amid dozens of other native languages, English continues to be the continent's most popular second language because of its heavy use in business, industry, and education. Every European city of any size has a population of English speakers — making English-speaking Baptist churches a viable proposition.

More than a dozen new churches have

been organized, including eight congregations in Eastern European capitals such as Moscow and Budapest, Hungary. As soon as it became possible, Merritt had begun to rally support for starting English language churches in Eastern Europe.

"One of the things that paved the way for our planting churches in Eastern Europe was the relationship we built with Baptist people there in the tough times," Merritt said. Before communism fell, the EBC had contributed almost \$250,000 in assistance to Eastern European Baptists with no strings attached during the preceding 10 years.

"We gave it just because of our love and concern," he said. The EBC had good cooperation from the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) and the national Baptist unions, he noted.

In 1991 Merritt was elected president of the European Baptist Federation, the umbrella organization for national Baptist unions across Europe. It is the only time an American missionary has been so honored.

Elizabeth Merritt is quick to point out that, while her main assignment has been to support her husband, "I have had my identity." She has chaired EBC committees, led pastor's wives retreats and served on the missions committee. For the past five years she has led women's work in the EBC and even edited the convention's newsletter for a while.

But her interest in counseling has given her a virtual second career. "When working with John and serving the churches, I had the opportunity to talk with many people. I didn't have a counseling background and at some point I saw the need to get some help because I could get only to a certain point with a person."

So she wound up returning to college and earned a degree in sociology from the University of Southern Mississippi. Later she earned a master's degree in counseling from the European branch of Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. Her new skills helped her in her missionary partnership with her husband.

John is a native of Mississippi and grew

up in Macedonia and Petal. Elizabeth was born in Mobile, Ala., but grew up in Chicora in Wayne County. The two met at a youth revival John helped lead in Clara; Elizabeth came with a cousin. "When I first saw him, he was leading the music. I didn't like him one bit," Elizabeth recalls.

John graduated from Clarke Memorial College before heading to New Orleans Seminary. He later earned a degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. During his second year in seminary he heard the late Baker James Cauthen, head of the FMB, talk about the challenge of foreign missions.

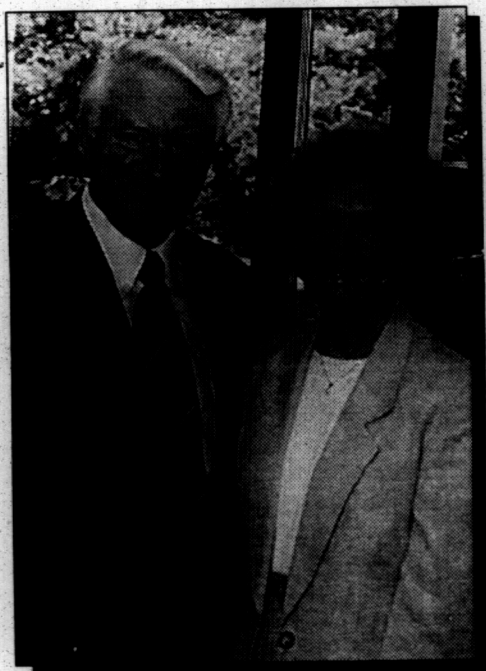
"Dr. Cauthen said suppose you saw six men carrying a heavy log and five men were on one end and one man was on the other. If you wanted to help, which end would you go to? He used to say that in the Southern Baptist Convention there were more than 25,000 ordained Southern Baptist pastors. And in all of the rest of the world there were less than 1,000. If God loves all the world and wants the world to be saved and if he has called you to preach, where do you think he's calling you to go? That first got my attention to foreign missions," John said.

They were appointed foreign missionaries in 1964. They first served an English-speaking Baptist church in Milan, Italy. While there they helped start three Italian Baptist churches. This past summer one of the churches, Castorate Primo Baptist Church, invited the Merritts back to speak.

When Merritt became general secretary of the EBC in 1972, the convention had just 37 churches. That number has almost doubled under his leadership.

The EBC has named its long-range endowment fund in their honor. Already the fund has more than \$500,000. Eventually, interest from the fund will be used to endow the starting of new English-speaking Baptist churches across Europe.

When the Merritts are peacefully retired back in Mississippi, their long-held dream of starting new churches will still be going strong.



The Merritts

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Big Black casino opposed

3

Reaching the unchurched

4

Braswells back on field

5

Missionary dies in church

7

FamilyNet flying high

The only Christian organization licensed to own and operate a Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) will soon add FamilyNet from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission (RTVC) to its 50-channel lineup. Dominion Video Satellite, Inc. of Naples, Fla. will utilize their "Sky Angel" satellite to begin broadcasting the 24-hour FamilyNet programming on Dec. 10. RTVC president Jack Johnson said, "Recent developments in telecommunications policy have made it possible to begin plans for worldwide evangelism via DBS. During these last days, the preaching of the gospel is going to depend a great deal on modern technology." Viewers can receive Sky Angel's digital programming for life after paying a one-time \$195 fee. Viewers will need a DISH Network-brand 18-inch satellite dish and receiver hardware; other DBS receivers are not compatible with Sky Angel. Specially-priced DISH Network hardware packages are available, however. For more information, write Sky Angel, Dominion Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 75329, Baltimore, MD 21275-5329.

Looking back

10 years ago

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board convenes in the Sky Room of the Baptist Building in Jackson, as part of a trustee-inspired plan to hold a board meeting once each year outside the Annuity Board's home office in Dallas.

20 years ago

Bill Hardy Jr., minister of education at First Church, Columbus, is elected chairman of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's board of trustees during the board's semi-annual board meeting in Olive Branch.

50 years ago

M. Theron Rankin, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, commends Baptists in Mississippi and across the Southern Baptist Convention for the \$3.5 million post-war China relief campaign, which he says will advance Baptist work in China by at least 50 years.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

Christians often victims of 'friendly fire'

Another season of American political campaigns has passed, to the relief of an exhausted electorate.

Analysts paid to talk about politics *ad nauseam* have complained about the "coarsening" of the political process in this country — as if American politics was ever anything but coarse.

In the midst of the coarse talk and even coarser conduct, one of the big topics of this campaign among the television talking heads was, once again, religious people injecting religious ideas into races for important government offices.

Religious people involving themselves in secular politics seems to unnerve non-religious media and political types, who have an elitist tendency to talk down to the rest of us anyway.

They proceed, virtually without fail, to conjure frightful visions of an Ayatollah leading his blind, mindless followers to take over the government and plunge America back into the Dark Ages.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, but it's hard to argue with someone who buys ink by the barrel or electricity by the megawatt.

Christians should not be intimidated. There is a place for us, and it's important that we are part of the process that leads to good government.

Christians should offer themselves as candidates, and Christians should support Christian candidates.

Christians should pray for the candidates, and we should continue to pray for and respect our leaders when they are chosen (Heb. 3:7, 17). We are to be Christlike in our all dealings with other people, including politicians.

There is a disturbing minority of Christians, however, who apparently feel free to employ worldly political techniques to achieve success in the campaign process.

There was at least one Mississippi Baptist church leader who injected himself in a most partisan manner into a congressional election, in a district in which he does not reside.

This church leader wrote two scathing letters — the first on church letterhead — and mailed them to Southern Baptists who do reside in this particular congressional district.

In the letters, he called into question the Christian service and ethics of a Southern Baptist candidate. He used vague language and incomplete documents to impugn the candidate's integrity.

All in all, it was ugly.

Non-Christians don't understand what we're all about, but they get a strong impression of Christians based on how we conduct ourselves in our relationships with others.

They don't see us in church; they see us



in the marketplace.

Even if the church leader's allegations prove to be true, our corporate Christian witness has been harmed by the manner in which he chose to bring the charges (Matt. 18:15).

The next time you hear the television talking heads shooting down Christians, keep in mind that we often supply them with the ammunition.

GUEST OPINION:

Your Christian witness

By Faye McCraw, member
Tuckers Crossing Church, Laurel

Your Christian witness, the outward reflection of an inward cleansing, is something you carry about with you every moment. What is your outward reflection? Want to test yourself and see?

Are you a spiritual snob?

Do you truly involve yourself in other's lives (not just your circle of friends or those who can benefit you)? Are you a friend to the friendless? Are you aware of other's needs? Do you do all that you can do to help meet those needs?

Are you a prayer warrior or a gossip monger?

Do you share prayer requests with God or with every Tom, Denise, and Harriet you can find? Do you sincerely fast and pray for your loved ones, neighbors, and Christian brothers and sisters? Do you spend as much as five minutes a day in prayer for each of your children? If you aren't praying for your own children, who do you think will?

Do you spend quality time studying the Scripture?

The Bible is the best selling book in America. If everyone who buys one is studying it, then why is America in such spiritual distress? God's Word is most important.

Do you meditate?

I don't mean sitting cross-legged on the floor; I mean listening to God. Do you wait for God to share his plans with you? Jer. 29:11 says, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Do you trust, believe, and obey, or do you worry, fret, and stray?

Phil. 4:19 says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Are you a pew potato or a participator? Churches are filled with pew sitters. What is needed are more children's church workers, teachers, nursery workers, choir members, and visitation participants.

Do you love? John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved

you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Love is contagious! The first century Christians multiplied because of the love they displayed.

Christ said we are to love one another. That includes friends, enemies, and other denominations. They will know you by the way that you love.

Hugh Black said, "We have cause to suspect our religion if it does not make us gentle, and forbearing, and forgiving; if the love of our Lord does not so flood our hearts as to cleanse them of all bitterness, and spite, and wrath."

Christ said, "we are known," not by our works, our church membership, the initials that follow our name, our bank account, or the kind of car we drive, but "by the way we love." We all need to pray and humble ourselves before a most Holy God.

Mississippi churches setting record CP pace

October giving to the Cooperative Program (CP) by churches in Mississippi totaled \$2,460,905, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Total giving for 1996 is \$20,616,410, which is \$1,271,902 (6.58%) more than the amount given in the first 10 months of 1995. Another Mississippi CP record will be established if giving continues at the current pace.

Pro rata giving is also ahead

by \$1,215,590 (6.27%). The pro rata budget is figured by dividing the total Mississippi Cooperative Program budget of \$23,280,984 by 12 and then multiplying by the number of months elapsed in the budget year.

Cooperative Program gifts help fund such activities as the Bible Drill clinics in November. More Mississippi Baptist children and youth participate in Bible Drills than any other state in the Southern Baptist Convention.

SBC reports increase in CP gifts for October '96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) gifts for the month of October were up more than 12% over the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Gifts for October 1996 totaled \$12,315,117, compared to the same month in 1995 of \$10,937,383, for a 12.6% increase. The October receipts were \$1,377,734 more than

October 1995.

The first month of the SBC fiscal year, 1996-97, saw the Cooperative Program Allocation Budget also exceeded for the month. The \$12,315,117 was 1.88% above the budget requirement for the month of \$12,087,791, or \$227,325.

Designated gifts for the month were down \$610,681 from the previous year's month. October 1996 totaled \$1,715,893 compared to October 1995 of \$2,326,574, a 26.25% drop.

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Convention highlights to be broadcast in Nov.

Highlights of the 161st annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) will be shown on a number of American Christian Television System (ACTS) stations and other church cable television systems during

the weeks of November 17-30.

"In Christ..." was the theme of the convention, and is the title of the 58-minute highlights video.

The video includes:

◆ an introduction by Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB);

◆ Bible Treasures by Robert Hamblin, professor at New Orleans Seminary;

◆ inspirational music by:

- ◆ Mississippi College Concert Chorale;
- ◆ Sanctuary choir, First Church, McComb;
- ◆ Sanctuary choir, Emmanuel Ch., Grenada;
- ◆ Mississippi Singing Churchmen;
- ◆ One Voice and a musical tribute to retired pastors, church staff, and missionaries;

◆ "My Journey In Christ" testimony by retired minister David McCubbin;

◆ portions of messages preached by Clarence Cooper Jr., MBC first vice-president and pastor of Emmanuel Church, Grenada; Jimmy Porter, MBC president and pastor of First Church, McComb; Richard Jackson of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Tex.; Mildred McWhorter, retired home missionary; and Causey.

The MBCB Department of Broadcast Services (DBS) produced the video in cooperation with First Church, Jackson; First Church, Hattiesburg; and Anderson Productions, Jackson.

Sound & Communications of Jackson provided sound engineers for the convention.

"In Christ..." Bible Treasures, and convention sermon videotapes are available from DBS on 1/2-inch-VHS, for loan by December 16.

DBS will also loan 3/4-inch videotape or S-VHS format videotape to churches with access to a cable channel for broadcast.

For more information, contact DBS at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

"In Christ..."

Rankin County,
cable channel 2
Nov. 20, 8 p.m.
Nov. 25, 7 p.m.

Greenville
PCA cable channel 17
Nov. 18, 7 p.m.
Nov. 21, 11 a.m.

Bruce
Bresnan Comm., cable channel 2
Nov. 17, 6 p.m.
WO7BN LPTV, channel 7
Nov. 20, 6 p.m.

Hattiesburg
Pinebelt cable channel 6
Nov. 18, 9 p.m.
Nov. 19, 8 p.m.
Nov. 21, 1 p.m.

Calhoun City
Vista Comm., cable channel 27
Nov. 21, 7 p.m.
Dec. 5, 7 p.m.

Jackson
ACTS of Jackson, channel 40
To be announced

Cleveland
ACTS channel 10
Nov. 19, 11 a.m.
Nov. 24, 4 p.m.

Newton
Cablevision channel 10
Nov. 17, 6 p.m.
Nov. 18, 7 p.m.

Grenada
LPTV cable channel 13
Nov. 20, 6 p.m.
Nov. 24, 9:30 p.m.

Yazoo City
Warner Amex channel 10
Nov. 18, 8 p.m.
Nov. 20, 8 p.m.

Opposition urged on Big Black casino site

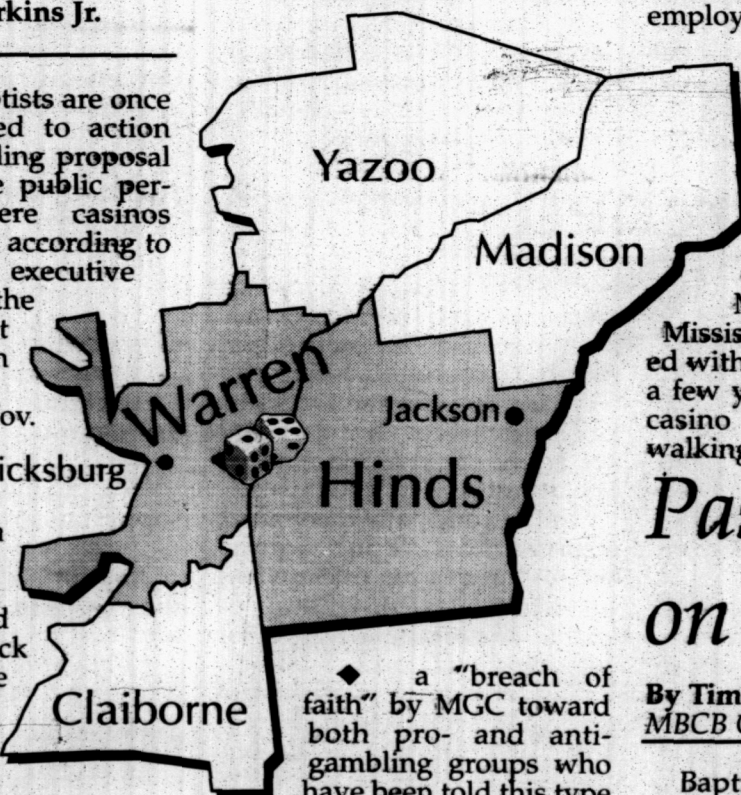
By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptists are once again being called to action over a new gambling proposal that threatens the public perception of where casinos should be located, according to Paul G. Jones II, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

"On Friday, Nov. 15, the Mississippi Gaming Vicksburg Commission (MGC) will hold a hearing on whether a casino site will be approved for the Big Black River at the Flowers exit on Interstate 20.

"This would be the first true move inland toward the center of the state, and would bring one or more casinos 14 miles closer to the Jackson metropolitan area," Jones said.

Among the reasons cited by Jones for opposing the proposed location along the Big Black River boundary between Hinds and Warren Counties are:



◆ a "breach of faith" by MGC toward both pro- and anti-gambling groups who have been told this type of inland site would not be approved.

◆ the Big Black River site is illegal because it is not in Warren County, due to a technicality in the description of the Warren County boundary along the river.

◆ an economic disaster in Vicksburg caused by tax and

employment disruptions.

◆ the offer to build a NASCAR racing track along with the casino is a "pie in the sky" promise with little basis in fact.

◆ Mississippi is already saturated with gambling sites.

Massive opposition by Mississippi Baptists is credited with forcing the withdrawal a few years ago of a proposed casino development within walking distance of Gulfshore

Assembly, the state Baptist campground in Pass Christian. MGC also promised to label the site unacceptable for casinos.

Jones is urging concerned Baptists to once again contact the gaming commissioners and the MGC executive director, as they did for the controversial Gulfshore Assembly site.

"Approval of the Big Black River site would constitute bad public policy and would be a rejection by MGC of what is in the best interest of our state," Jones said.

Pastors: beware seminar on 'true family values'

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

Baptist ministers are receiving through the mail a promotion that appears to be a sweet deal until the fine print is closely studied.

The material promotes a free, three-day trip to Washington, D.C., for a seminar entitled, "Empowering Christianity Through True Family Values."

Topics to be covered at the seminar include, "A God-Centered Marriage," "God's Plan for Conjugal Love," and "Christ and the Church: Lessons from Ephesians 5."

Included in the material is an endorsement from a Baptist pastor.

However, a notation on page three of the brochure reveals that the event is sponsored by Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church who is

worshipped by his followers as the messiah.

Members of the Unification Church believe Adam and Jesus both failed in God's plan for the perfect family, according to Eunice Bryant of Pittsboro, interfaith witness consultant for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Bryant said members of the group believe Moon is the "third messiah," who succeeded in fathering the perfect family.

"It's cultic to the core," she pointed out.

For more information on the Unification Church and other cults, contact Eunice or Hollis Bryant, interfaith witness consultants, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Churches track modern ability to relocate

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

First in a series

One of the major continuing stories of modern times is the movement of people from one location to another.

The story is as least as old as Abraham who, upon hearing the call from God, left his home east of Ur and headed out for a new promised land.

People today, for reasons as many as the colors of Joseph's coat, pack their belongings and head off in search of their own promised land.

This movement from one community to another is the defining process of urbanization, according to Walter E. Ziegenhals in his book "Urban Churches in Transition."

People move into a new area in search of that ideal home. Soon a community forms.

Institutions rise that give definition to that community, such as governments, schools, businesses and churches.

An infrastructure of buildings, streets, businesses and utilities are built to support the community.

As time goes by, everything in the community ages. As people move on, a different kind of neighbor moves in.

Fear, paranoia, prejudice — all these plus other factors com-

bine to put the community into transition.

In some areas, transition is glacier slow, taking years to move through its various stages.

In areas of rapid population growth, a community can go from being one of the newest manicured suburbs to being the next high crime neighborhood in less than a generation.

Transition is most often thought about in large urban areas.

However, the same forces are at work in smaller cities and towns. Even rural areas can experience transition.

A local Baptist church in a transitional community finds itself in a difficult situation.

Ziegenhals identifies six factors that determine how a church faces transition.

♦ Leadership: Leadership is the single greatest predictor of a church's vitality in difficult times.

The pastor becomes the key person as the church seeks to find its way in the sea of transition.

♦ Congregation's self-understanding and purpose: If a church does not already know its mission, transition can force the issue of defining mission and purpose.

♦ Denominational factors: Baptists understand that each church is local and autonomous.

A Baptist church does not need approval of an ecclesiastical body to react to change.

Each church interprets its own vision of God's will.

♦ Church polity:

How a church goes about making decisions has an impact on how it responds to transitional forces.

♦ Racism:

The single most difficult factor in transition is the race issue.

Some church members are not ready to embrace a multi-racial fellowship.

Yet, even those who are ready often find that the cultural differences make the experience problematic.

♦ Finances: Declining attendance figures, loss of leadership, weakened loyalty and a discouraged membership results in a dim financial picture.

Many transitional churches are in older facilities that are expensive to maintain and update.

In the midst of transitional communities, churches have to face who they are and why they exist.

Robert Weber, theology professor at Wheaton College and author of "The Church in the World," writes, "The church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in light of the gospel."

In a transitional community that process can be challenging but rewarding.

Next week: Churches on the move.



Analysis:

Reaching the unchurched shrouded in myth

by Carl M. White,
Associate Editor

Most of the unchurched in America fail to attend church not because of a lack of belief in God or because of hostility toward the church.

Most of the unchurched do not attend church because of the perception that the church has nothing particularly interesting or important to offer them.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB) in Atlanta.

The research report notes that four out of 10 people are not actively involved in a local congregation.

The study also indicated that the unchurched, when compared to the church, tend to be younger and disproportionately male.

These findings are in keeping with other national surveys,

such as those reported by the Gallup organization and George Barna.

Lee Stobel in his book "Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary," indicated similar findings.

Strobel, a pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., writes that the unchurched are more commonly male than female; have a median age two years younger

with 32% composed of college graduates; and almost always have some church experience in their background.

When those in the D.C. survey were asked why they did not attend church, the number one response was "too busy."

The second most common response was "don't know." One in three of the unchurched surveyed was unwilling or unable to provide a reason for not attending church.

The D.C. survey also asked participants about their perception of different religious groups.

The good news is half of the respondents were neutral regarding most religious groups, including Southern Baptists.

The bad news is, among the unchurched, Southern Baptists have the highest percentage of negative responses among Christian groups.

Strobel indicates there is not a lack of interest in religion among the unchurched. In fact, they are often very religious. They are just turned off to the church.

George C. Hunter, III, dean of the E. Stanely Jones School of Evangelism and World Missions at Asbury Seminary in Kentucky and author of "How to Reach Secular People," says Christians must throw off three myths before they can penetrate the unchurched pool in America.

First myth:

The unchurched are not interested in religion.

Second myth:

The unchurched are amoral or immoral.

Third myth:

The unchurched are philosophically sophisticated.

Hunter's research indicates the opposite. The unchurched are very interested in religion.

While many are morally adrift, they are very concerned about many of the same moral issues as those in the church.

Rather than being philosophically sophisticated, they tend to be more culturally programmed. Moreover, the unchurched are seeking meaningful relationships and a purpose for life.

Surveys like this one conducted by Mount Vernon Baptist Association of Annandale, Vir., and books like those written by Strobel and Hunter indicate that there is a window of opportunity for Christians to reach the lost in American society.

Christians need talk more about their faith and less about a particular church. We should focus more on relational issues and offer hands-on opportunities to attack societal problems.

As Strobel observes, the unchurched man is not so much concerned as to whether or not Christianity is true, but rather, will it work in his life?

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SECULAR PEOPLE

From "How to Reach Secular People"
by George C. Hunter, III

1. Secular people are essentially ignorant of basic Christianity.
2. Secular people are seeking life before death.
3. Secular people are conscious of doubt more than guilt.
4. Secular people have a negative image of the church.
5. Secular people have multiple alienations. They need to belong somewhere.
6. Secular people are untrusting.
7. Secular people have low self-esteem.
8. Secular people experience forces in history as "out of control."
9. Secular people experience forces of personality as "out of control."
10. Secular people cannot find "the door." They are lost.

George G. Hunter, III, "How to Reach Secular People," (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992) pp. 44-54.

That is the conclusion of a recent survey conducted in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and reported by the

than the average American; have an income some \$4,200 higher than the typical American; is more educated than the norm,

Mississippi missionary makes full recovery

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Boyle native Larry Braswell, Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, has recovered from injuries received in a Sept. 18 accident near his home in Chapeco, Brazil.

Doctors in Jackson released Braswell Nov. 4 to return to work in Brazil. Braswell, his wife Alicia, a Jackson native, and their three children plan to return to Brazil during the week of Nov. 18.

"Two weeks ago the doctor said I could carry on a normal schedule," Larry said.

He has been speaking in churches since then. Doctors told the Braswells that Larry's recovery has gone far beyond what medically could have been done.

"We know where it came from," Alicia said.

Braswell suffered serious head injuries in the Sept. 18 traffic accident. He was alone on a sparsely traveled road when he collided with the rear of a fully loaded logging truck.

A log crashed through the windshield of his Volkswagen Jetta station wagon, scalping him along the side of the head and severing a major vein to his brain.

Thus began what the Braswells describe as a series of miracles.

A passenger in a nearby vehicle was a Christian. When Larry was carried to a hospital in the city of Lajes, the passenger called a Christian friend in that city of over 200,000. The friend called the only Baptist pastor in the city, Alicia said.

The accident happened around 2 p.m. The pastor was

at the hospital before 3 p.m. ministering to the Braswells. It was about 10 p.m. before the first Foreign Mission Board personnel arrived, she said.

"They found that Brazilian pastor on his knees outside of Larry's room praying," Alicia

Larry, the doctor began dismissing the team, she said.

"It is nothing less than a miracle," Alicia said.

Larry has no memory of the accident. "My doctor said from the time I was hit until my brain re-booted two weeks later is wiped out," he said.

Other than that, Larry is fully recovered.

"We want to express our appreciation to Mississippi Baptists," Larry said.

"We have been overwhelmed by the love and support of the people of Mississippi," Alicia added.

After the accident, the Braswells had to leave Brazil so quickly, there was no time to gather clothing.

"People have brought us everything we needed," Larry said.

"I have hardly had to cook," Alicia said, because of the amount of food brought by people to the missionary residence of Alta Woods Church, Jackson.

The Braswells have received over 300 cards and letters, and

dozens of E-mail messages.

"They have come from all over the world," Larry said.

"People we have never even met or heard of have sent us cards and money," Larry said.

"These have been from substantial gifts to an envelope with five one-dollar bills in it from a WMU circle," he added.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want to be forgiven for my sin and set free from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name
John 1:12

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Churches track modern ability to relocate

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

First in a series

One of the major continuing stories of modern times is the movement of people from one location to another.

The story is as least as old as Abraham who, upon hearing the call from God, left his home east of Ur and headed out for a new promised land.

People today, for reasons as many as the colors of Joseph's coat, pack their belongings and head off in search of their own promised land.

This movement from one community to another is the defining process of urbanization, according to Walter E. Ziegenhals in his book "Urban Churches in Transition."

People move into a new area in search of that ideal home. Soon a community forms.

Institutions rise that give definition to that community, such as governments, schools, businesses and churches.

An infrastructure of buildings, streets, businesses and utilities are built to support the community.

As time goes by, everything in the community ages. As people move on, a different kind of neighbor moves in.

Fear, paranoia, prejudice — all these plus other factors com-

bine to put the community into transition.

In some areas, transition is glacier slow, taking years to move through its various stages.

In areas of rapid population growth, a community can go from being one of the newest manicured suburbs to being the next high crime neighborhood in less than a generation.

Transition is most often thought about in large urban areas.

However, the same forces are at work in smaller cities and towns. Even rural areas can experience transition.

A local Baptist church in a transitional community finds itself in a difficult situation.

Ziegenhals identifies six factors that determine how a church faces transition.

◆ **Leadership:** Leadership is the single greatest predictor of a church's vitality in difficult times.

The pastor becomes the key person as the church seeks to find its way in the sea of transition.

◆ **Congregation's self-understanding and purpose:** If a church does not already know its mission, transition can force the issue of defining mission and purpose.

◆ **Denominational factors:** Baptists understand that each church is local and autonomous.

A Baptist church does not need approval of an ecclesiastical body to react to change.

Each church interprets its own vision of God's will.

◆ **Church polity:** How a church goes about making decisions has an impact on how it responds to transitional forces.

◆ **Racism:** The single most difficult factor in transition is the race issue.

Some church members simply are not ready to embrace a multi-racial fellowship. Yet, even those who are ready often find that the cultural differences make the actual experience problematic.

◆ **Finances:** Declining attendance figures, loss of leadership, weakened loyalty and a discouraged membership results in a dim financial picture.

Many transitional churches are in older facilities that are expensive to maintain and update.

In the midst of transitional communities, churches have to face who they are and why they exist.

Robert Weber, theology professor at Wheaton College and author of "The Church in the World," writes, "The church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in light of the gospel."

In a transitional community that process can be challenging but rewarding.

Next week: Churches on the move.



Analysis:

Reaching the unchurched shrouded in myth

by Carl M. White,
Associate Editor

Most of the unchurched in America fail to attend church not because of a lack of belief in God or because of hostility toward the church.

Most of the unchurched do not attend church because of the perception that the church has nothing particularly interesting or important to offer them.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB) in Atlanta.

The research report notes that four out of 10 people are not actively involved in a local congregation.

The study also indicated that the unchurched, when compared to the church, tend to be younger and disproportionately male.

These findings are in keeping with other national surveys, such as those reported by the Gallup organization and George Barna.

Lee Stobel in his book "Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary," indicated similar findings.

Strobel, a pastor at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., writes that the unchurched are more commonly male than female; have a median age two years younger

with 32% composed of college graduates; and almost always have some church experience in their background.

When those in the D.C. survey were asked why they did not attend church, the number one response was "too busy."

The second most common response was "don't know." One in three of the unchurched surveyed was unwilling or unable to provide a reason for not attending church.

The D.C. survey also asked participants about their perception of different religious groups.

The good news is half of the respondents were neutral regarding most religious groups, including Southern Baptists.

The bad news is, among the unchurched, Southern Baptists have the highest percentage of negative responses among Christian groups.

Strobel indicates there is not a lack of interest in religion among the unchurched. In fact, they are often very religious. They are just turned off to the church.

George C. Hunter, III, dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of Evangelism and World Missions at Asbury Seminary in Kentucky and author of "How to Reach Secular People," says Christians must throw off three myths before they can penetrate the unchurched pool in America.

First myth:

The unchurched are not interested in religion.

Second myth:

The unchurched are amoral or immoral.

Third myth:

The unchurched are philosophically sophisticated.

Hunter's research indicates the opposite. The unchurched are very interested in religion.

While many are morally adrift, they are very concerned about many of the same moral issues as those in the church.

Rather than being philosophically sophisticated, they tend to be more culturally programmed. Moreover, the unchurched are seeking meaningful relationships and a purpose for life.

Surveys like this one conducted by Mount Vernon Baptist Association of Annandale, Vir., and books like those written by Strobel and Hunter indicate that there is a window of opportunity for Christians to reach the lost in American society.

Christians need talk more about their faith and less about a particular church. We should focus more on relational issues and offer hands-on opportunities to attack societal problems.

As Strobel observes, the unchurched man is not so much concerned as to whether or not Christianity is true, but rather, will it work in his life?

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SECULAR PEOPLE

From "How to Reach Secular People"
by George C. Hunter, III

1. Secular people are essentially ignorant of basic Christianity.
2. Secular people are seeking life before death.
3. Secular people are conscious of doubt more than guilt.
4. Secular people have a negative image of the church.
5. Secular people have multiple alienations. They need to belong somewhere.
6. Secular people are untrusting.
7. Secular people have low self-esteem.
8. Secular people experience forces in history as "out of control."
9. Secular people experience forces of personality as "out of control."
10. Secular people cannot find "the door." They are lost.

George G. Hunter, III, "How to Reach Secular People," (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992) pp. 44-54.

That is the conclusion of a recent survey conducted in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and reported by the

than the average American; have an income some \$4,200 higher than the typical American; is more educated than the norm,

Mississippi missionary makes full recovery

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Boyle native Larry Braswell, Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, has recovered from injuries received in a Sept. 18 accident near his home in Chapeco, Brazil.

Doctors in Jackson released Braswell Nov. 4 to return to work in Brazil. Braswell, his wife Alicia, a Jackson native, and their three children plan to return to Brazil during the week of Nov. 18.

"Two weeks ago the doctor said I could carry on a normal schedule," Larry said.

He has been speaking in churches since then. Doctors told the Braswells that Larry's recovery has gone far beyond what medically could have been done.

"We know where it came from," Alicia said.

Braswell suffered serious head injuries in the Sept. 18 traffic accident. He was alone on a sparsely traveled road when he collided with the rear of a fully loaded logging truck.

A log crashed through the windshield of his Volkswagen Jetta station wagon, scalping him along the side of the head and severing a major vein to his brain.

Thus began what the Braswells describe as a series of miracles.

A passenger in a nearby vehicle was a Christian. When Larry was carried to a hospital in the city of Lajes, the passenger called a Christian friend in that city of over 200,000. The friend called the only Baptist pastor in the city, Alicia said.

The accident happened around 2 p.m. The pastor was

at the hospital before 3 p.m. ministering to the Braswells. It was about 10 p.m. before the first Foreign Mission Board personnel arrived, she said.

"They found that Brazilian pastor on his knees outside of Larry's room praying," Alicia

Larry, the doctor began dismissing the team, she said.

"It is nothing less than a miracle," Alicia said.

Larry has no memory of the accident. "My doctor said from the time I was hit until my brain re-booted two weeks later is wiped out," he said.

Other than that, Larry is fully recovered.

"We want to express our appreciation to Mississippi Baptists," Larry said.

"We have been overwhelmed by the love and support of the people of Mississippi," Alicia added.

After the accident, the Braswells had to leave Brazil so quickly, there was no time to gather clothing.

"People have brought us everything we needed," Larry said.

"I have hardly had to cook," Alicia said, because of the amount of food brought by people to the missionary residence of Alta Woods Church, Jackson.

The Braswells have received over 300 cards and letters, and

dozens of E-mail messages.

"They have come from all over the world," Larry said.

"People we have never even met or heard of have sent us cards and money," Larry said.

"These have been from substantial gifts to an envelope with five one-dollar bills in it from a WMU circle," he added.

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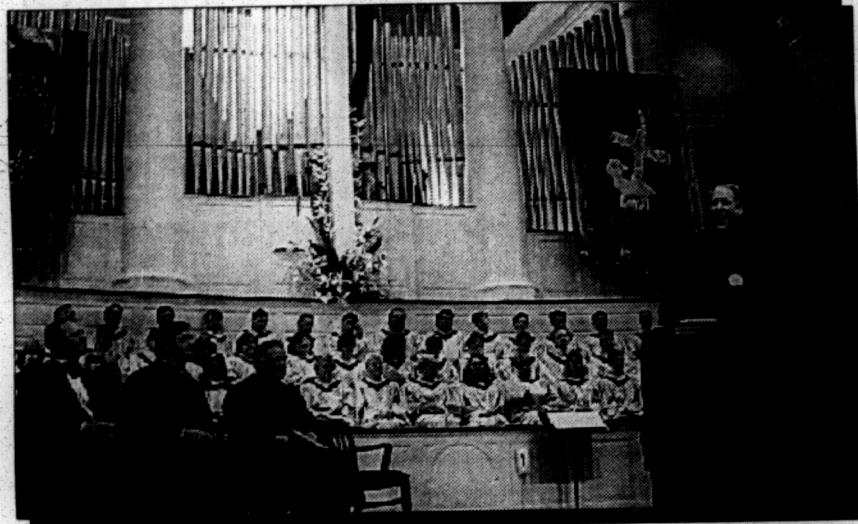
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Kelley becomes eighth NOBTS president

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — The inaugural service for Charles S. Kelley Jr. as he officially became the eighth president of New Orleans Seminary



Charles S. Kelley Jr. (right) addresses the attendees at his Oct. 29 inauguration as the eighth president of New Orleans Seminary. On the podium with Kelley were (from left) Ken Hemphill, president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth; Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. (Special photo)

(NOBTS) on Tuesday morning, Oct. 29, more than anything else was a time of worship.

"We have come into his house and are gathered in his

name to worship Christ the Lord," said C. Ferris Jordan as he welcomed representatives from fellow academic institutions in the Association of Theological Schools and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, seminary trustees, executives from Southern Baptist Convention agencies, Kelley family members and local dignitaries, as well as the faculty, staff, and students of New Orleans Seminary and others.

"... this is a time when we reaffirm our commitment to ... the Lord of this school, and when we acknowledge Dr. Kelley as the servant leader who is serving under the lordship of Jesus Christ," said Jordan, chairman of the inaugural committee and professor of adult education at NOBTS since 1978. He also occupies the J. M. Frost Baptist Sunday School Board Chair of Christian Education.

The invocation was given by the father of the president, Charles S. Kelley Sr. of Beaumont, Texas, who has been acquainted with the seminary since its days as the Baptist Bible Institute in New Orleans' Garden District in the early 1900s.

He has been on the seminary's foundation board for many years.

Scriptural challenges were presented to Kelley by each of the five other SBC seminary presidents, first led by Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Seminary who also serves this year as chairman of both the council of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminary presidents and the SBC Inter-Agency Council.

"Although some might call us institutions in competition," Patterson said, "the truth of the matter is that we are institutions deeply committed to one another and to the success of each of the other."

Martha Ann Powell of Liberty (Miss.), president of the seminary's foundation board, read the dedication Scripture, Matthew 28:18-20, known as the Great Commission, and Matthew 22:37-40, known as the Great Commandments.

Kelley's mission statement for New Orleans Seminary is for the school "to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries."

Kelley said, "It is time to get to the task. ... We will judge the health of our seminary by the health of the churches our graduates lead."

In reference to his repeated call for revival across the country, in the city of New Orleans and at the seminary, Kelley said, "I believe there is an awakening left before Christ returns. ... I believe if we hold up the candle, God will strike the match."

Williams urges equal funding for NAMB work

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Brotherhood Commission trustees heard a call for adequate funding support for the new North American Mission Board (NAMB) and praise for the faithfulness of a staff in the midst of transition at their Oct. 25-26 meeting.

"I hope that NAMB's birthright is that it has been 'birthed right,'" said James D.

Williams, Brotherhood Commission president.

"This new flagship agency will need not only our prayer support, but also financial support."

"At the next meeting of the SBC Executive Committee meeting in February, critical decisions will be made regarding the budget support of those entities that are named as a part

of the new structure of the Southern Baptist Convention, as outlined for us in the 'Covenant for a New Century,'" Williams said.

Williams told trustees he supports a Cooperative Program budget allocation of 50% for what will become the International Mission Board, 25% for the North American Mission Board and the remaining 25% "spread among the seminaries and other agencies."

"Why do I say this?" Williams asked. "We Southern Baptists are a missions people."

"We first came together in 1845 for the purpose of propagating the gospel. Missions support should receive priority in the budget."

"Some are suggesting that

NAMB's Cooperative Program allocation be cut back to the current Home Mission Board level of 19.56%.

At a minimum, Williams added, the new NAMB should receive 24.2%, the percentage now allocated to the three entities (Home Mission Board (HMB), Brotherhood, and the Radio and Television Commission (RTVC) that will make up the new agency.

"I'd like to see that rounded out to 25%," he said. "You say that's just about 1%. Well, 1% of \$140 million is \$1.4 million ... so, even 1% is significant."

The Brotherhood Commission is scheduled to merge with the HMB and RTVC by next June, forming NAMB, to be based in Alpharetta, Ga.

Falwell denies joining SBC despite \$1,000 contribution

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) — Jerry Falwell says he has not joined the Southern Baptist Convention, even though a recent contribution from his church to a new SBC-related state convention in Virginia qualifies him for Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) membership.

The fundamentalist pastor of Thomas Road Church in Lynchburg, Va., told his congregation Oct. 30 he is only "a Baptist in the South" and has not abandoned his independent stance, reported the "Roanoke Times and World News." He will, however, maintain close ties with Southern Baptists, a spokesman said.

Thomas Road Church sent a \$1,000 contribution Sept. 25 to the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, which broke away from the 173-year-old Baptist General Association of Virginia this fall, charging it with liberalism and lack of loyalty to the national convention. The SBCV forwards 50% of its undesignated receipts to the national convention.

Asked about the affiliation,

Falwell responded in an Oct. 24 statement that he and his church were taking "our permanent stand with the national and Virginia Bible-believing conservatives who have rescued the Southern Baptist Convention from theological liberalism." He stressed, however, the church would not end its "support to our missionaries who are affiliated with many different fellowships and faith mission boards."

Falwell spokesman Mark DeMoss told the "Religious Herald" Oct. 31, "It was not the church's intention to join the Southern Baptist Convention ... but rather to show support for Southern Baptist conservatives in Virginia. ... His [Falwell's] intentions were to provide financial and moral support to conservative Southern Baptists in the state and in a tangible way through a monthly contribution."

"The Thomas Road Baptist Church and I are very sensitive to anyone thinking we may have abandoned our independent groups," the Roanoke paper quoted Falwell as saying. "We have not."



Religious educators

Officers for the Mississippi Baptist Religious Educators Association are, (from the left) Mose Dangerfield, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), 1st vice president; Cortez Hutchinson, First Church, Yazoo City, secretary/treasurer; Linda Reeves, MBCB, 2nd vice president; Jeff Ingram, Highland Church, Vicksburg, president; Steve Hurt, Calvary Church, Tupelo, president elect. (photo by Carl M. White)



Bivo breakfast

Attending the Mississippi Baptist Bivocational Ministers Fellowship breakfast during the Mississippi Baptist Convention were (from left) Matt Buckles, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board pastoral ministries consultant; Horace Ross, Ridgeland, new president of the bivocational fellowship and leader of Campers on Mission; Dale Holloway, Florence, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board bivocational consultant; Fred Tarpley, Old Rice Road Church, Madison, immediate past president of the bivocational fellowship. (Photo by Carl M. White)

LET'S WAKE UP

Editor:

"High price exacted for dinner invitation" (Oct 24 issue) prompted me to write this. I have talked to some of the people in Vicksburg about how many horrible things some of the people there have experienced (since legalized gambling).

Those were sad stories, and

without a doubt we have not heard even the beginning of what has happened to so many good people. Most people who go to those boats never intend to even gamble and get sucked in over their heads. It's a sucker game. It's a disease.

I just wonder if Gaylon's pastor ever preached condemning this horrible thing our own state government brought down on us. That high price will continue to worsen as time goes by. We most likely have not seen the tip of the iceberg yet.

It could be that the pastors in this part of the state and those near the Gulf Coast venture to see for themselves how many

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Call for preschool workers issued for Dec. 8 FMB missionary appt. service

Jackson-area churches planning to dismiss Sunday evening services Dec. 8 to attend the Foreign Mission Board appointment service at First Church, Jackson, are urged to send their preschool workers normally scheduled for that Sunday evening to First Church to help with the anticipated large overflow of children.

"First Baptist preschool will be open and ready to receive preschoolers, birth through (age) three. Four- and five-year olds will go into the service. If you do not provide at your church for preschool care, please notify First Church of an approximate number you expect to come.

"We also welcome your preschool teachers to assist with the preschoolers," said Sarah Harrell, First Church preschool minister.

For more information and to volunteer workers, contact Harrell at (601) 949-1912, or Shelly Poyner at (601) 949-1904.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

of their members are regular customers. It just could be they just might see one of their deacons or a Sunday School teacher having a ball, or crying about losing their shirt. I am not judging.

I'm told that if the church stayed away for a month that

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they would have to close up shop. The legislators who voted to allow this damnable menace should bow their heads in shame. They too will have to answer for such a vile act. They should be recalled and never be allowed to hold any kind of public office again.

The preachers who preach "tickle the ears" sermons will also have their rewards on that day. To hear some of them you would think that the words Hell and sin are just myths.

Someone said that the "fire" in the pulpit has been replaced with the fire in the cook stove at the church. We cannot blame the preachers for all of it. We hired them to make us feel comfortable.

Wake up out of our sleep. We have slept too long. Remember Gaylon... and the other Gaylons.

I believe that there is a real possibility that we could get rid of those boats.

Tom Walden
Jackson



MISSIONARY NEWS

Missionary speaker dies in midst of church visit

EASLEY, S.C. (BP) — Irene Lawson, a Foreign Mission Board missionary to Italy, died Oct. 30 while presenting a program on missions at Rock Springs Church in Easley, S.C.

Doctors said Lawson, 54, probably died of a cerebral aneurysm, according to her son, Marion Lawson, a member of the church.

He was among the 600 to 700 people attending the church's Wednesday night prayer meeting, where his mother and father, Ken Lawson, were featured speakers.

The Lawsons, who lead an international Baptist church in Rome, were on furlough in Easley, her hometown.



Lawson



Send The Light

Join fellow Southern Baptists
as they are appointed to carry
the gospel light into a dark
world.

First Baptist Church
Jackson, Mississippi
December 8 * 6:30 p.m.



NAMES IN THE NEWS

Jay Arthur Turner, 74, a native and resident of Leakesville, died Nov. 3.

Funeral services were held Nov. 6. Turner, a member of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, was on the Pastoral Church Building Aid Committee. He is survived by his wife Martin S. (Marty) Turner and one brother John Parham Turner, both of Leakesville.



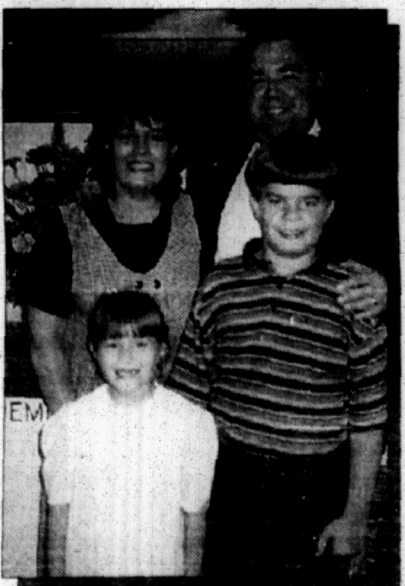
Antioch Church, Holmes Association, honored **Daisy Malone** on Sept. 14 for 25 years of service as secretary-treasurer. A dinner was held in her honor where she was presented a silver tray and gift certificate. She continues to serve Antioch Church as a primary age Sunday School teacher. Pictured from left are Malone; granddaughter Danielle Kellum; her husband "Red"; and Riley Ainsworth, pastor.

Meredith Beal, daughter of Donna Beal and the late Edward Beal, received her second year wreath and third and fourth year bars for perfect attendance in Sunday School at Woolmarket Church, Biloxi.

Richard J. Shropshire, formerly pastor of Brodie Road Church, D'Iberville, has opened offices for Christian counseling for adults, youth, and children in crisis. For more information, call (601) 392-2608, or write to The Barnabas Center, Inc., 342 Dianne Dr., D'Iberville, MS 39532.



Bethel Church, Water Valley, honored its pastor and his wife, **James and Shirley Edwards**, (above) with a surprise two year anniversary service and dinner on Oct. 20. Also honored was **Steve Frederick**, (below) music minister at Bethel Church, with a surprise five year anniversary service and dinner on July 28. Frederick is pictured with his wife Beverly, son Steven, and daughter Anna Beth.



Davis

Neal Davis, pastor of Jericho Church, Baldwin, and his family were honored with a reception during Pastor Appreciation Month. The Davises have served at Jericho Church for five years. They have two daughters, Sara Beth and Callie. Pictured with Davis is his wife Shirlene.

Paul Crowley was honored



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on Sept. 29 for his first anniversary as pastor of Woolmarket Church, Biloxi. He was presented a certificate of appreciation and a love offering. Dinner on the grounds was held following the morning worship service.



Chuck Hazelwood and **Ronnie Jones** were ordained as deacons on Sept. 29 at Grace Church, Philadelphia. Pictured from left are Hazelwood, Jones, and Dennis Duvall, pastor.



Antioch Church, Holmes Association, licensed **Billy "Mac" Ables Jr.** to the ministry on Oct. 13. He is currently serving as youth director at Antioch Church. A student at Holmes Community College, Ables is available to serve as pulpit supply where needed. He can be reached at (601) 834-2239. Pictured are Ables; his parents Billy Mac and Sandra Ables; and Riley Ainsworth, pastor.

STAFF CHANGES

James Allen Hall, a 1996 graduate of Delta State University (DSU), has been called as youth minister at Parks Church, Drew, and Calvary Chapel, Parchman. Hall, also employed at the Sound Center in Cleveland, will serve bivocationally on the staff of these two churches that share their staff and most ministries in a cooperative way. He will continue to be a part of Renaissance, DSU musical group, while he takes additional graduate courses.

Orchard Church, Mobile, Ala., has called **Danny Langley** as minister of music and youth. Langley previously served at Temple and Franklin churches in Pascagoula. He is a graduate of the University of Mobile.

Raymond Parkin, pastor of **Crestview Church, Petal**, for 25 years, has announced his retirement and resignation, effective Oct. 1. He was honored with a special recognition service on Oct. 6. The morning speaker was George Berger, director of missions for Lebanon Association. A luncheon followed the service and an afternoon service of praise and singing followed with Bobby Shurden, pastor of Pineview Church, Hattiesburg, in charge. Parkin received a Bible, a watch, and a love offering. His wife Wanda received a quilt from the ladies of the church. A native of Birmingham, Parkin attended Clarke College, Samford University, and New Orleans Seminary. Other churches pastored in Alabama and Mississippi

included Carmel in Meridian. Parkin is available for a bivocational pastorate, interim pastorates, supply, and revivals. His address is 336 Garden Lane, Petal, MS 39465, or call (601) 544-1503.

Faithview Church, Jackson, has called **Nicki Burns** as minister of youth, effective Sept. 22. A native of Jackson, Burns is a senior at Mississippi College. Her previous place of service was Parkway Church, Clinton. Wilbur Irwin is pastor.

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Happy 100th Birthday...

Orphanage filled with love and support

By Hazel K. McClintock
Former Orphanage resident

In 1925 my two brothers, Melvin and Benson, and I were admitted to what was then known as The Baptist Orphanage in Jackson.

Our father had died. My mother was expecting another child and was unable to support us.

It was very difficult for a while because we were all put in different dormitories and only saw each other at mealtime.

As we grew older, we realized how fortunate we were to have a nice place to live, plenty of food, and someone to love and care for us.

When we were old enough to assume duties, we were given work to do. I worked in the kitchen and laundry.

Can you believe I made biscuits for 250 children every morning?



George and Hazel McClintock

My brothers worked on the farm (we grew a lot of our food) and in the dairy.

We had a good Christian background and were taught a

lot about how to get along in life with others. In other words, "love your neighbor!"

I stayed at the Orphanage until I finished high school and business school. I got a job and left to support myself.

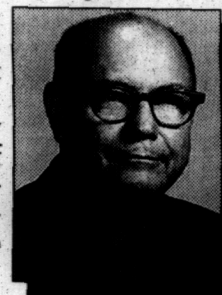
In 1944, I met and married a

young attorney, George McClintock. We have four children and four grandchildren and still live in Jackson.

I still keep in touch with many of my "brothers and sisters," and we enjoy reminiscing at biannual reunions at The Baptist Children's Village.

I thank God every day for the Baptist people of Mississippi, for their support and love for my brothers and me — as well as so many, many others.

Former B'hood Director dies at age 84



Howell

Retired Mississippi Brotherhood Director Elmer Howell, 84, died Oct. 28. Funeral services were conducted on Oct. 30 at Magee's Creek Church near Tybertown with interment in the church cemetery. Juston

Morgan, pastor, conducted the services.

Howell began his work at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) on Feb. 1, 1958, and retired Jan. 31, 1977. Two of those years he served as the Royal Ambassador consultant. The next 17 years he served as the director of the Brotherhood Department.

"Elmer had a heart for men's work. He instituted men's retreats by having two and sometimes three per year. He began man and boy rallies by bringing boys and men together in six rallies per year," said Paul Harrell, director of the Brotherhood Department, MBCB.

"Elmer had a heart for missions. In 1962 he led 23 men in Mississippi Baptists' first mission project to Denver, Colo. He instituted an annual conference for families on Saturday called World Missions Conference," he said.

"Elmer had a heart for ministry. He joined the efforts of the Pioneer Missions Committee to send suits to pastors in Montana. That effort began the Brotherhood Suit Project Ministry that now relates to seven New Work states. Today that project has distributed 3,818 suits," he said.

"Because of his commitment to involve men in missions, Brotherhood enrollment continued to increase each year during his 19 years of leadership," added Harrell.

Howell is survived by his wife Eunice; two grandsons, Bob and Tom Lowery; and brother, Hugh Howell.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Missionary Appointment Service

First Baptist Church, Jackson
6:30 p.m., December 8, 1996

REVIVAL DATES

New Hope (Oktibbeha): Nov. 15-17; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Carroll Roberson, guest speaker; Bob Brandon, pastor.

Calvary, Corinth: Nov. 17-20; Sunday, 10:45 a.m.; each evening at 7; Rodney Bowling, Meridianville, Ala., evangelist; Eddie Wilhite, Tupelo, music; Warren H. Jones, pastor.

Bay Vista, Biloxi: Nov. 17-20; Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 6:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. fellowship; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; James Messer, Theodore, Ala., evangelist; Gordon Alford, Vancleave, music; pre-revival Brotherhood breakfast, Nov. 16, Frank Gunn, speaker; Jerry N. Watts, pastor.

REVIVAL RESULTS

Raymond (Metro): Oct. 20-23; Jerry Swimmer, Iuka, evangelist; Billy Causey, Raymond, music; 12 professions of faith; eight by letter; Tommy A. Jarrett, pastor.

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Longing for restoration

Lamentations 5:1-10, 19-22

Have you ever longed to go back to a place that remains indelibly etched in your memory? A place where everything was right with the world, or so it seemed? A place that your mind has occasion to drift off to when the heat of living goes up? Think of that place for a moment and then imagine that the reason you can't go back there is because God has judged your activity while you were there.

Jeremiah is crying out to God ("lamenting") over his people being dragged off into Babylonian captivity. Every really precious thing they owned was deserted or destroyed back in Jerusalem (5:1-2). Their hearts are aching from the thought of being without that which was

precious to them. They had lost family, property, freedom, and economic security. Nothing felt right in this strange place in a foreign land.

You know, it's alright to feel that way when something or someone is no longer available to us. It's not a sin to miss something that has even been taken from us as long as it doesn't lead to further sin. To long for something the way it used to be is a common longing. To desire to reverse the clock and change our circumstances happens to us all.

Prior to this plight, God had provided every possible blessing to his people. Now they had to fend for it all (vv. 3-4). They couldn't even rest from their



Jim Phillips

labors because their oppressors dogged their every step. Not even food for the table was guaranteed in this place of captivity (vv. 5-6). The picture of God's people in such a desperate straight might cause us to immediately pause and thank God for his blessings.

This was their judgment but they strongly felt it was not because of their own sin (v. 7). They were having to suffer the consequences of their ancestor's failings. Their ancestors had been warned countless times of their wages of their wicked ways, now the time had come to pay up. To imagine that our personal sins go no further than our own lives is one of those tricks which Satan sells us. To think that all sin is done in a vacuum and that no one else has to suffer the consequences just isn't often true. All sin provides an atmosphere for further decline.

Can God speak to people suffering from sin's plight? Can he prompt prayers of repentance and remorse for the purpose of bringing restoration? Indeed he can and he does! No immediate remedy was in sight for their dilemma, but God would eventually bring things around if the people's hearts turned back to God. God doesn't get some Divine glee from chastening his people. He wanted to restore and return them to their favored status and place but not until desire for his direction was restored.

Has God been using your circumstances to try and get your attention? Are you suffering a loss in your life right now due to your own choosing? Has God grown seemingly quiet because you've chosen to listen to other voices for awhile?

I believe that God desired better things for his children than they were currently receiving. But because God is holy and righteous, unholiness and

unrighteousness by those who call on his name must be punished. While Jeremiah was lamenting over their condition, God was looking ahead to the time when he could bring them back to the place of blessing. The right place to long for first is always the Presence of God (v. 21). Then when our right relationship is restored through confession and repentance, the memory of our favorite blessings and provisions can come once again. Do you long for those uninterrupted times of fellowship with the Lord? Take the time and the necessary steps that are needed through the scriptures and in fellowship with the Lord and those places in your mind will be restored by God's unmistakable Presence. Take a trip down memory lane and long for those better days of walking with the Lord. You and your family can go there together.

Phillips is pastor, North Greenwood Church, Greenwood.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Empowered witnessing

Matthew 9:36-10:42

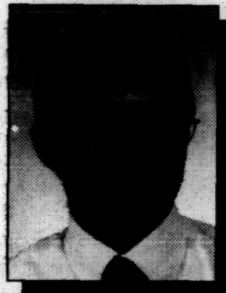
The Compassion of Jesus (9:36). One of the characteristics of Jesus that the Gospel writers highlight frequently is his compassion. It was because Jesus had genuine compassion on others that his ministry affected so many people so effectively. When the Twelve wanted to be rid of people and their problems, Jesus had compassion and wanted to solve their problems. Jesus saw the crowds and naturally felt sympathy for them. Surely in his younger days Jesus had observed sheep who were separated from their shepherd. The animals naturally would become nervous and proved to be easy prey to predators. Jesus felt compassion for people who seemed to have lost their way, being without strong and wise leadership.

The Need for Harvesters

(9:37-38). Jesus knew that the wayward condition of the people needed to be solved.

These were people who were separated from God and who needed to find their way. Jesus knew that they needed help in finding their way. The numbers of the people were great, but helpers were in short supply. Jesus urged his disciples to pray for more harvesters. As a farmer who has a crop in the field with bad weather approaching, Jesus needed help, and he needed it quickly. He knew that quick action and a bigger work force would rescue these people.

The Source of Power (10:1-26). Jesus had a ready source of workers at his disposal, the Twelve. He had called these fishers of men to be with him and to



Ronald Bishop

help him in his work. He gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal diseases. He then sent them out, giving them instructions. They were first to go to Jews only. Later, Jesus would send them among the Gentiles.

The disciples were to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. They were not to take any pay for their deeds. Neither were they to carry with them the trappings of wealth. They were to accept gratefully any hospitality extended to them. They were not to beg people to embrace the Gospel. Instead, if anyone rejected, they were to move on to more accepting people. The disciples also would face dangers in their journeys. They were to take care not to be anxious about opposition. They were to trust in God for leadership.

The Courage to Witness Boldly (10:27-33). Knowing that danger accompanies any pursuit

can affect one's effectiveness. Jesus urged his disciples to witness boldly, knowing that people have no control over one's soul, only the body. Jesus reminded his disciples that God is more concerned for his people than they are concerned about themselves. God cares for the birds of the air. Surely he cares for human beings. Even when it seems that one is facing insurmountable opposition, God is in control. The important point is to be faithful, no matter what. Unfaithfulness results in serious consequences.

The Demand for Total Commitment (10:34-39). Jesus demanded that his followers be loyal to him. He demanded that they place him first among their priorities. Nothing in the life of the Christian should take precedence over God's will. Jesus does not desire family conflict for you. But if you have to choose between God's will and what a relative or friend wants you to do, the choice must be clear. God's will is more important.

Anyone who places family ahead of God is denying God his rightful place and setting a bad example for the family. God expects his people to totally commit to him. Anything less is unacceptable.

Some Christians who were trying to do God's will came face to face with insurmountable obstacles. They were faced with persecution and even the threat of death. Many would consider the options and decide to live at all cost, even if it required the denial of one's faith. Jesus' message to them was—"No amount of life is worth the denial of your faith. Be faithful to God, even if it costs your life."

Jesus knew that he and his followers had a great task in making God's love known to all the world. To reach this goal requires the compassion of Jesus, many workers, divine power, much courage, and total commitment.

Bishop teaches philosophy and religion at Jones County Junior College, Ellisville.

LIFE AND WORK

A sacred trust

Ex. 20; Lev. 19; Luke 10

Human life, a gift from God, is a sacred trust which is to be valued, respected, and protected. One glimpse of news coverage reveals the problems which result when life is not respected. The rate of murders, abortions, terrorism, and suicides is ever increasing. God's Word gives clear guidelines for affirming and protecting life.

No excuse to murder (Ex. 20:13). God forbids murder which is the unlawful killing of a human being by another. The Hebrew word, *rasah*, is used in verse 13 and is the specific Hebrew word for personal murders ranging from manslaughter to premeditated murder. However, it is not the word used for killing in war or

judicial execution. Genesis 9:1-6 gives the guidelines God established related to killing for food and for capital punishment. Numbers 35 clearly states how the nation of Israel was to deal with murder. The Old Testament recognized the reality of war and does not forbid killing in war (Deut. 7:1-2; 16; 20:16-17).

The basic purpose of this commandment is to set forth the precious value God placed on each individual's life. God created man in His own image, thus, each person is of great value to God. No one is to take the life of another.

No entry to endanger (Lev. 19:16). Leviticus 19 records God directing Moses to speak His var-



Cynthia Douglas

ious laws to the people of Israel. These commands were for the benefit of the people. Here the Mosaic Law prohibits acting or speaking in such a way as to place another's life in danger. Gossip and slander can put another person's life in danger. God says in verse 2: "Be holy."

Holiness involves being separated from all which is evil and attaining to do all that is good. Believers should strive to be like God by respecting everyone. Believers should not want to do anything which would result in harm to someone else.

No room to harbor anger (Lev. 19:17). Another command from the Mosaic Law is to not hate your brother in your heart. Outward actions are a result of what is in the mind and heart. Anger erupts when we feel something has been said or done to violate a relationship or to vio-

late our personal rights. The potential for anger lurks within us, therefore, believers must be on guard. Psalm 37:8 says: "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret - it leads only to evil." God understands our emotions but we must guard against anger. Anger has the potential to lead to false judgments and harmful behavior.

No right to seek revenge (Lev. 19:18a). The attitude of revenge can lead to violence against others. God states clearly we are not to seek revenge or to bear a grudge. When adults face injustice, stress, and failure in the American justice system, one reaction is to seek personal revenge. Revenge is not a choice for Christians. Because of the sanctity of life, a spirit of love and forgiveness must prevail in a believer's life. God is a God of justice and ultimately He will render a just verdict. Vindication and judgment are in God's hands.

Love your neighbor (Lev. 19:18b; Luke 10:29-37). Because of the value of human life and God's great love for His creation, we are to love our neighbors. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?", He gave the illustration of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33). Neighbors are simply people we encounter in our everyday routines of life. Believers express God's love by acts of love and concern for others. Whenever our lives intersect with hurting people, an opportunity for ministry exists.

The commandment to not kill has many implications. The act of murder is forbidden, further, our emotions and intent are to be honoring to God. People should see God's love in all of our actions. Believers need to be personal examples of God's love and care for all mankind.

Douglas is a member of First Church, Columbus.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Women on Mission fall conference, sponsored by the Mississippi WMU Department, was held Sept. 20-21 at Gulfshore Assembly. Women attending the conference from Liberty Church, New Albany, (from left, front row) are Christy Davis, Lisa Wingo, Kim Chism, Cindy Sappington; (second row) Jennifer Sappington, Brenda Powell, Diane Sprouse, Judy Stout, Dana Pickens; standing, Traci Stout and Melissa Cox.

A meeting of the **Mississippi affiliate of the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States** will be held at 7 p.m. on Nov. 14 at Wesley Biblical Seminary Chapel, 6014 Flora Drive,

Jackson. Stephen Flick, associate professor of theology at Wesley Seminary will speak on "The History of the Lord's Day in America." For more information, call (601) 957-1314.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Armstrong Williams, radio talk-show host, will be the speaker for the Student Government Association Forum in Nelson Hall's SWOR Auditorium at Mississippi College, 7:30-9 p.m., on Nov. 14. Williams is presently one of the nation's most visible black conservatives. He promotes the abolishment of welfare, the restoration of morality in society, and the end of affirmative action. For more information, call (601) 925-3239.

William Carey College Speech and Debate Team (Forensics) recently competed in the 1996 Northeast Louisiana State University Forensics Tournament in Monroe, La. Carey placed first overall in the tournament, in individual events sweepstakes, and in debate sweepstakes. Students participating were John Miller, Columbia; Jon Celoria, Smithdale; Leanne Bennett, Diamondhead; Candace Cochran, Petal; Jon Watts, McComb; Chris Smith, Petal; Rebecca Dockens, Gulfport; Jackie Outley, Hattiesburg; Brian Lucas, Petal; Roger Lott, Seminary; Justin Bunton, Loranger, La.; and Shannon Clark, Tupelo.

Blue Mountain College Department of Speech and Theatre and the Department of Music will present "A Sentimental Journey Musical Revue," featuring music, songs, and dances of the 1940's era. The production, under the direction of Donna L. Clevinger, will run Nov. 21-23. All performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Garrett

Auditorium. For reservations or ticket information, call Carla Benson at (601) 685-4771 ext. 31.

Mississippi College Opera Studio will present "The Christmas Gift" on Nov. 21 and 22 at 8:15 p.m. in Aven Auditorium. This four-scene opera is a free adaptation of the children's story, "Why the Chimes Rang," by Raymond MacDonald Alden. For ticket information, call (601) 925-3440.

Mississippi College School of Business is sponsoring the Fall International Business Workshop "International Business: Where do I begin?" made available through funding from a Department of Education grant. The workshop, scheduled for Nov. 22, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in Self Hall is free but seating is limited. For registration or additional information, call Randall Robbins at (601) 925-3416 or 925-3214.

Review courses for the ACT test Assessment scheduled for Dec. 14 at Mississippi College are being offered in four sessions. The sessions include: Test Mechanics, Nov. 16; Grammar, Nov. 23; Math, Dec. 7; and Science, Dec. 7. Sessions meet from 9-11:30 a.m. except the Science Review will meet from 1-3:30 p.m. For information, call (601) 925-3264.

Winter School of Music at William Carey College will present a concert by Ivan Rijos from Puerto Rico, Nov. 19, 7 p.m., at Dumas L. Smith Auditorium. For ticket information, call (601) 582-6175.

The Mississippi Council on Compulsive Gambling is hosting a conference for clergy, Nov. 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Edison Walthall Hotel in Jackson. The conference will help pastors assist congregation members and their families who have a gambling problem and provide resources for additional help. The registration is \$15 which includes lunch. For more information about the conference, call the Council at (601) 353-4010.

Performances for Ballet Magnificat's "A Christmas Festival" will be held at Thalia Mara Hall (Jackson Municipal Auditorium) on Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 2 p.m. For ticket information, call (601) 977-1001.

Rena Lara Church, Rena Lara, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. Activities on Saturday will include breakfast, 8 a.m.; message at 8:45 a.m. by Leonard Russell, former pastor; worship, 11 a.m., Artie Nute, former pastor; noon meal; and 1 p.m. service. Sunday will include Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., Billy Beckett, former pastor; noon meal; and worship at 1:30 p.m., Bill Choate, former pastor. Harold Talley is pastor.

The Women's Celebration Conference was held at Camp

Lake Stephens, Oxford, Oct. 18-19. The conference leader was Brenda Kneece, WMU leader from South Carolina. The Women on Mission group of First Church, Coffeeville, attending the conference, from left, front row, are Rene Shaw, Tammy Cohea, Rosanne Easley, Lisa Melton, Sheila Ayers, Kneece, Elizabeth Johnsey; back row, Karen Brown and Denise Boxx. Steve Carver, musician from Starkville, is pictured in the background.



Women on Mission, First Church, Coffeeville



Hillcrest Church, Jackson, recently held its RA Recognition Service. Receiving their badges for the year were (back row) Jonathan Reves, Jay Taylor, Brad Dorman, Kevin Epperson, David Carpenter; (front row) Will Dorman and Joey Clack; Garrett Barber, (not pictured). The leaders are John Reves and Rocky Clack. John F. Taylor is pastor.



Macedonia Church, Mendenhall, held a note burning ceremony on Oct. 6 for its church building. Taking part in the ceremony, pictured from left, are Lloyd Sanders, Gene Erwin, pastor, Don Wallace, Theo Boggan, and A. G. Weathersby.

HOMEcomings

East McComb, McComb: Nov. 17; 95th anniversary; Bible Study, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Mike Sutton, Tylertown, former associate pastor in youth and outreach, guest speaker; Curtis Brewer, Odessa, Texas, former member of East McComb Church, music; special testimonies by Howard Brister, McComb, and Charle Case, Simpson County, retired pastor; Ricky Kennedy, pastor.

Eastabuchie, Eastabuchie: Nov. 17; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; covered dish

dinner following morning service; Joel Ray, former director of missions, Lebanon Association, guest speaker; Donald Burch, minister of music, music; Arlie E. Spalding Sr., pastor.

Macedonia (Lauderdale): Nov. 17; 11 a.m. service; followed by covered dish meal and singing by Second Mile (formerly Common Ground); Jason Gross, pastor.

Hickory (Newton): Nov. 24; 10:45 a.m.; noon meal; 1:15 p.m. singing and dedication of sanctuary addition; Rodney Anderson, pastor, speaker.

Pro-life position fails to hurt candidates

WASHINGTON (BP) — Opposing abortion did not harm congressional candidates in the Nov. 5 election, according to poll results announced by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). In fact, failure to make abortion an issue may have hurt Republican challenger Bob Dole in his bid to defeat a pro-abortion president.

The election resulted in pro-life gains in the U.S. Senate but

losses in the House of Representatives, a NRLC spokeswoman said at a Nov. 7 news conference. On the core issue of abortion on demand, pro-lifers managed a net gain of two seats in the Senate but a loss of six seats in the House, NRLC Political Action Committee director Carol Long said. One Senate race and four House races remained undecided at the time of NRLC's news conference.

Abortion "worked for Republican candidates, contrary to much of the conventional wisdom," said David O'Steen, NRLC's executive director.

The poll results were consistent with those of 1988, '92 and '94, he said.

The poll's 5% difference between Dole (45) and other Republican candidates (50) can be attributed at least partly to the failure by the GOP challenger, who had an overwhelmingly pro-life voting record in

the Senate, to address the abortion issue, O'Steen said.

"For whatever reason, he didn't talk about the issue, and I think that was a mistake, a tactical mistake," O'Steen said.

"I think he could have run a little stronger campaign if he'd used the partial-birth issue, and, of course, Bill Clinton was extremely vulnerable there because what he was saying about it and his actions were two extremely different things, and he was allowed to get away with it."

Arson fund disbursement totaling nearly \$700,000

NASHVILLE, Tenn. BP — The Southern Baptist Convention's "Arson Fund" has distributed a total of nearly \$700,000 following the October distribution of \$35,948 to 17 states Nov. 5.

According to a spokesperson with the SBC Executive Committee, which receives funds from churches channeled primarily through state conventions, the distribution Nov. 5 brings the total to \$685,913 out of the "Arson Fund."

The "Arson Fund" assists African American churches victimized by arsonists. Like the four earlier distributions on July 3, Aug. 2, Sept. 5, and Oct. 4, the November distribution is based on a formula developed by the SBC Inter-Agency Council's Racial Reconciliation Task Force.

The "Arson Fund" was begun from an offering taken at the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans in June. That offering came at the request of then-SBC President Jim Henry, an Orlando, Fla., pastor, and initially raised \$282,000 in pledges and cash gifts. Most of the gifts since then have been from SBC-related churches wanting to

assist in the rebuilding of the burned churches, according to Jack Wilkerson, SBC Executive Committee vice president of business and finance.

The November distribution went to: Alabama (8.5%), \$3,055; Arizona (1.1), \$395; Arkansas (7.5), \$2,696; California (1.1), \$395; Florida (3.2), \$1,150; Georgia (2.1), \$754; Louisiana (9.5), \$3,415; Mississippi (9.5), \$3,415; Missouri (2.1), \$754; North Carolina (8.5), \$3,055; Northwest Oregon (1.1), Washington (1.1), \$790; Ohio (1.1), \$395; Oklahoma (1.1), \$395; South Carolina (18.1), \$6,506; Tennessee (8.5), \$3,055; Texas (13.8), \$4,960; and Virginia (2.1), \$754.

In addition to the monies, Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to rebuild the burned churches.

Donations to the SBC Arson Fund may be sent directly to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 (please mark check "Church Rebuilding Fund"), or the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203.



MC Christian service alumni officers

Officers for the Mississippi College (MC) Christian Service Alumni are (from left) David Mitchell, pastor, Van Winkle Church, Jackson, president-elect; David Prevost, Minister of music, Calvary Church, Tupelo, outgoing president; James Francis, Minister of Music, West Heights Church, Pontotoc, new secretary; Wiley Reid, pastor Friendship Church, Lincoln Association, incoming president; Van Quick, MC staff, Clinton (Photo by Carl M. White)



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

Please tell me what the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12), means in terms of a parent-adult child relationship. I am an only child in my late 30's with two children of my own. I am a Christian and an honors graduate of a prestigious university. My parents have built their whole lives around me and don't think I can function without them. They try to run my life; if I do not follow their orders, I am doomed to certain Hell for disobeying that commandment! God's will for my life is what I follow, and that may not always be by parents' will for me.

The verb, "honor," means to respect or glorify, and signifies that someone is a priceless treasure. We normally reserve that action for someone who occupies an important position in our lives.

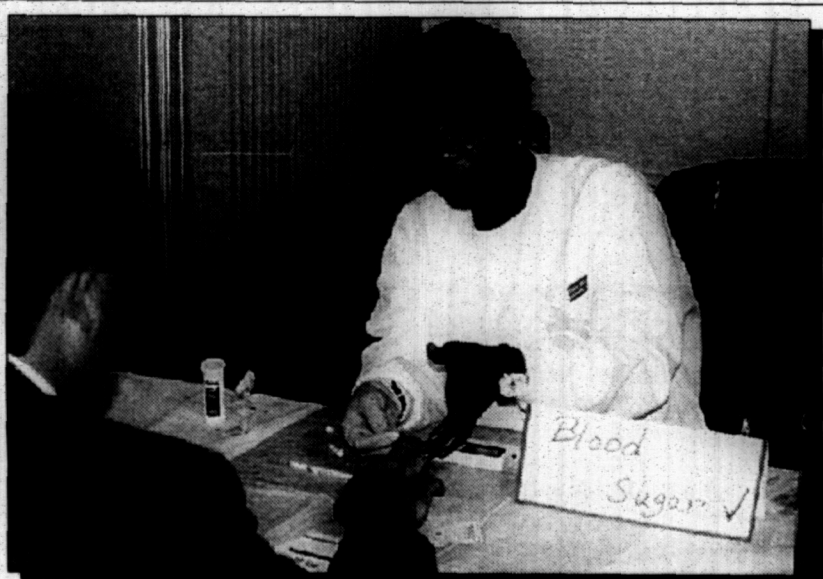
You honor your parents

when you remember in thanksgiving how they have enriched your life. This is also accomplished when you establish loving boundaries between them and you that plainly state, "Stop!"

Although this will hurt somewhat, it is necessary for you to take the initiative and make it stick, because parents in your situation find boundaries difficult to follow. Affirm them when they respond properly; encouragement and affirmation can change behavior. Help your parents find other outlets — church is a wonderful place filled with people who will help them through the grief they may feel at "losing" you.

A word to parents in this situation: Hear the yearnings of this adult child to get on with her life. Allow your children to freely grow toward their natural bents, then "let go and let God."

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



Health Fair

Debra Gunn, of Jackson, a student nurse at Mississippi College (MC), administers a blood sugar test to a participant at the Health Screening Clinic sponsored by MC and the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center during the Mississippi Baptist Convention. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Bibliocipher

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ANE ROPXT PF XTI
FZLFXOAJI NR XTPAHF
TNMIU RNS, XTI
IWPUIAJI NR XTPAHF
ANX FIIA.

TILSIEF IDIWIA: NAI

Clue: W equals V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Four Twenty-Three